GUIDELINES FOR SCHOOL LIBRARIES APPLYING FOR
LIBRARY SERVICES AND TECHNOLOGY ACT (LSTA) GRANTS

The relationship between school libraries and public libraries is a longstanding one that has been the subject of widespread discussion and controversy. Although the public library and the school library are two distinct organizations, they share some commonalities such as certain clientele (children and youth), collections of library resources, and a role in promoting reading and lifelong learning. On the other hand, it is acknowledged that each has its distinctive role and mission. The public library provides an opportunity for lifelong learning as well as resources to meet the educational, informational, and recreational needs of all its constituents. The school library also focuses on structured learning, and provides students and teachers with resources that are integral to learning and teaching. School libraries and public libraries, when adequately funded and equipped, can act as powerful catalysts in young people's lives.

California school libraries remain at the bottom in the nation (and have for the past several years) in a national poll that ranks states for elements such as trained school library staff, age of collection, and the amount of state funding available to school libraries. Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) grant funds cannot, and should not, be expected to alleviate this condition. LSTA is intended to supplement, not supplant, local or state funding and responsibility for school libraries. There are, however, goals that can be served by LSTA grant funding. The LSTA has several purposes that are relevant to school library development:

- to "stimulate excellence and promote access to learning and information resources in all types of libraries for individuals of all ages."
- to provide linkages among and between libraries."
- to encourage "libraries in different areas, and ... different types of libraries, to establish consortia and share resources."

The following guidelines regarding use of LSTA funds were identified to assist school libraries in preparing competitive grant project applications. As with all types of libraries, generally the highest priority for LSTA funding is for projects in a context of partnerships, alliances, and collaborative efforts, and in broad projects reflecting shared contributions and ongoing (post-grant) support among all partners. Many LSTA projects conceived by school libraries will be best directed toward a partnership with another library, such as a public library or a community college library, in order to amplify access to information sources. As an initial emphasis for school library assistance, the State Library strongly encourages school library/public library cooperation. Inter-library connections will maximize the pool of limited resources, leverage the benefits realized by the common client group, encourage community awareness of the value of providing information resources, and achieve the most from each grant dollar invested.

Both school libraries and public libraries need to be funded at levels that will enable them to participate in cooperative activities as equal partners. While LSTA dollars cannot guarantee funding improvements or alleviate the scarcity of ongoing operating funds, grant funds can make a difference - in stimulating ideas, strengthening community ties, and developing new forms of collaboration. The enclosed outline covers elements of LSTA guidelines as they pertain to school libraries.

GUIDELINES FOR PROJECTS INVOLVING SCHOOL LIBRARIES

THAT WILL BE MOST COMPETITIVE FOR LSTA FUNDING

To be judged highly competitive in the grant review process, an application must meet the following criteria:

- Project represents a cooperative effort among two or more libraries of different types and/or representing different jurisdictions, such as a balanced partnership between a school library and a public library, where the partners are equal players, with each partner contributing an equitable share of in-kind support and matching funds; projects benefiting only one school library or the school libraries in one school district are less competitive

- If no appropriate partner can be identified, the applicant library proposes to provide a benefit to more than one library or service to a clientele beyond its normal users

- Project identifies an underserved population, e.g., an underserved group of students, children, young adults, and/or families that will benefit from an LSTA project involving a school library; project can serve either a rural (including geographically isolated) or urban area

- Project involves direct service to the identified client population

- Project is a demonstration or is innovative in some way

- Applicant commits to the concept of sharing library resources (materials, staff expertise, etc.) with project partners and outside library users

- Proposal meets general LSTA grant program requirements, including the likelihood of continuation of the grant-funded project/service

ELIGIBILITY OF A SCHOOL LIBRARY TO APPLY FOR LSTA

In addition to the foregoing, if the applicant is a school, the applicant must have:

- An existing school library (local funded or other); it can be a public or private school

- A credentialed school library media teacher employed at the school or school district who will participate in the LSTA-funded project

- An existing library program with ongoing, assured basic financial commitment in the jurisdiction; no existing services will be diminished by grant money

- Approval of school board or appropriate educational authority to submit the grant proposal

EXAMPLES OF TYPES OF PROPOSALS FROM SCHOOL LIBRARIES
THAT ARE INELIGIBLE OR LESS COMPETITIVE

- Library facility construction
- Establishing a new library
- Acquiring or updating basic library or media collections
- Payment of salaries of school library staffing
- Procurement of basic library equipment (e.g. shelving), basic library automation or technology (e.g. a circulation system or an online catalog where none exists), or basic school library supplies

- Support of costs of ongoing library operations

    Generally, LSTA will not be used in ways that duplicate or supplant other sources of funding, such as the Universal Service Fund ("E-rate") for telecommunications.

EXAMPLES OF COMPETITIVE CONCEPTS AND COMPONENTS FOR PROJECTS

School library/public library link (programmatic):

- Homework help service sited in public or other library, in partnership with school library

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    Coordination of open hours between school library and public library

    Career center

    Service for latchkey children involving two types of libraries or other agencies

    Training of school librarians and librarians from other types of libraries in cooperative endeavors

    Curricular support and other programming involving two types of libraries

- School library/public library link (electronic):

    Connection of the public library's online catalog and a school's electronic learning programs to make them accessible between the two libraries and enable sharing between the two organizations as partners

    Curriculum-related electronic bulletin boards to share information in both school and public library

    Cooperative training on access to Internet for school age children and/or families

    Sharing an Internet Provider as part of a joint library service project